The Perfect

SPEECH

OF

Mr. John Gibbons,

AS IT WAS

Delivered by Himself on the Scaffold

AT

TOWER-HILL,

ON

FRIDAY the 22 of *August*, 1651. being the same Day that Mr *LOVE* (the Minister) was also executed.

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LIKEWISE,

His Desires to the People; His Protestation touching Religion; And his true Prayer immediately before his head was severed from his Shoulders.

Published by a perfect Copy, at the request, and for general satisfaction to his friends, and others.

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M. Gibbons *Speech upon the Scaffold.*

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Gentlemen,

I Am brought here to the Stage, where *I* am made a ſpectacle to God, to Angels, and to Men; an object of pity and compaſſion to my friends, where they ſee before their eyes a man in the prime of his yeers, and in the flower of his youth cut off as an untimely fruit, and as a Tree that burdeneth the ground, therefore they are ſorry; but this is no new thing, it is Gods ordinary way to ſuffer men to be caſt out, that he may receive them to mercy; the poor blind man was thrown out, but he was received to Jeſus Chriſt; the three Children were thrown into the Furnace, but they were received to God; that was the way that he delivered them: Do not ſtand wondring at Gods proceedings, whatſoever the men be, yet I bleſs God to eternity; *I* take it well at his hands, though it ſeem ſtrange; It is Gods ordinary way, and if it be, Chriſtians ſhould not ſhun any extremity, if it bring them to Jeſus Chriſt; and therefore *I* bleſs God, *I* come to this Scaffold, to this place, with as much willingneſs as ever Bridegroom did to receive his Bride: *I* know the paſſage of bloud is but ſhort, and the way to the Crown; though my head be ſevered from my body, yet my ſoul to all eternity ſhall be joyned to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and *I* in the preſence of you all, deſire you to witneſs, that *I* from my ſoul deſire, that the preſent Power and Court that is ſet up, have done themſelves no more hurt then they have

done me, for *I* am assured that all that ever their Sentence hath done, hath put me in the way that *I* am going; from earth to Heaven, from Friends, and comfort, and creature relations, that of necessity ere long must be left; and it were a great deal of folly to desire that that we cannot keep; *I* am going to receive the end of my Faith, the reward of my Hope, the comfort of my Prayers, and of all the prayers and tears of Gods people; where I shall enjoy the Society of all Believers, the sight of God, the fellowship of the Saints, and imbrace God to all eternity; these things none can take from me: Therefore why should *I* desire to keep these things that the providence of God cals for? and therefore *I* need not stand grumbling and repining at Gods Will: And *I* freely submit.

I come not hither to tell a long Story, or to make a discovery of my sinnes; the Lord knowes (upon the examinaion of my heart) how many thousands and hundred Millions of sinnes I have, and I desire to pour out floods of Teares for them; and *I* desire that through the Merrit of Christ, the atonement might be made to God for them; from my child-hood I must needs say, I have been such; *I* have seen a Father buried in the grave, and a Sister, and a Wife, and a Childe laid in the grave, but all that ever I could do to this day, could never put my sinnes into the grave, with all my endeavors and all the afflictions and mercies I have had: It is an infinite comfort, though *I* enjoy nothing else; after this day I shall assuredly never sinne any more, nor grieve the Spirit of God any more, nor dishonour God any more; I profess, though I should not come to Heaven, it is a comfort to me that I shall not sinne and grieve the Spirit of God any more; Blessed be God to all eternity, *I* shall be out of the power of sin.

That is not all, but further, since *I* can remember

ber that *I* ſet my face towards God; from my childhood *I* have hedged in my way with thorns, that I might go the ſtricteſt and ſtraiteſt way, my way to bring me to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; it is a wonderful comfort, and bleſſed be God for this dayes work; *I* profeſs *I* would not change my condition for ten thouſand worlds: *I* bleſs God I find the reward and benefit of the prayers of good people in a wonderful manner,; they have more cauſe to go home and ſeek days of rejoycing and dayes of praiſe, then to mourn and repine.

In the Biſhops time *I* was one that was a mourner, that lamented the time and the State, and deſired to ſhed tears when the Church was under affliction.

And truly, I further declare, that *I* have alwayes been and gone upon Goſpel Principles; *I* have alwayes deſired to apply particular promiſes to my particular condition: *I* know ten thouſand generals will do me no good, onely particular Faith and application will do me good, and ſtrengthen and ſupport me this day: *I* have alwayes ingaged upon pure Principles of Religion to the beſt of my knowledge, and the utmoſt of my endeavors; I have alwayes ingaged upon thoſe Principles, from thoſe *I* never departed; and in thoſe Principles by Gods grace this day I ſhall die and come to ſeal with my Bloud; *I* alwayes owned the wayes of God, when they were moſt perſecuted; *I* think an hundred, nay (*I* may ſay) a thouſand can tell, that I did never dare to ſave my Life, or my Skin, or any thing, to quite Religion, though it were never ſo much clouded, and deſpiſed, and diſdained; *I* do now this day rather a thouſand times willingly lay my Neck on the Block; believe it, I am a dying man, *I* chuſe it, and had rather have it, then injoy the moſt glorious life and liberty with thoſe that are Betrayers of the Truth of God and a good conſcience; O Sirs believe it, carry it from a dying man:

In the time of afflictions a good Conscience will stand you in more stead, and more comfort, then a thousand worlds: *I* bless God more that he now smiles on me, then if all the Emperors and Princes in the world did own me.

I have never been without a trembling heart, since the Spouse of Christ was clothed in mourning. *I* alwayes thought it my duty, and the least *I* could do, to lie in tears, when the Church rowled in bloud; and the Lord grant that every Christian soul may make it his work: *It* is the great breaking of my heart, that *I* could never get my heart to break enough, to see the Church of Christ in misery. Though God have called, and Christ have called, and there was never such calling; *It* wounds my soul that *I* could never mourn more for the Churches afflictions; and the Lord keep all that fear the Lord and his Name, keep those from dayes of rejoycing and thanksgiving for the death of those that God owns, and will wipe all Tears from their Eyes, and those God accounts their bloud precious: Have a care of being of the number of those that rejoyce over the heapes of the carkasses of Gods people.

I am now at the last brought to suffer death as an enemy to the STATE, though my conscience tels me I am a friend to the Lord Jesus Christ, His Church, and Members; and though the Jewes heretofore told *Pilate*, if he did let the Lord Christ go, he was no friend to *Cesar*: Must *I* not say truly, my Conscience bids me say it in the case *I* am in, whosoever desires to keep the Lord Jesus, to keep Integrity of heart, and innocency of life, and desires to walk in an unspotted life and conversation, whosoever desires to let these old broached Heresies go, and draw their sword for Christ, are not these declared to be Enemies to the STATE, and are against them

them that desire to keep a good Conscience; and if there be no Law of God to condemne us, (as the Jewes said) There is a Law found out, and by that Law he ought to dy.

I will not make a discourse of the manner of my Tryal; there were ten thousand Men, and Angels, yea God himself can witness the hard measure I had.

I am in Charity with all the World, the Lord of Heaven forgive them; I say nothing my self, only I will tell you what a Gentleman said that was an Eywitness at my Tryal, that knows all the Actions and Laws as well as any man in the place; He professed that he saw so much, that he would not haue a hand in my Sentence for all the Gold that could lie in Westminster-Hall. I must say for mine own part, and in my Conscience I believe it, if they do not repent, the Lord will call them to an account for this days work, I believe they have gone against God, and his Laws, and the Laws of Nations; I believe so, I speak not this from a bitter spirit; the Lord of Heaven forgive all them that ever had a hand in it, as now I desire mercy when I shall come before the Lord; I looke upon them as a Company of poor Instruments that the Lord knowes how to deal with, and will call to account; it will be time enough when they come to ly upon their dying beds: The Lord grant that my Blood may not stand between them and mercy when they put up their prayers, that nothing concerning me may stand in the way of all the mercy that their souls shall stand in need of: Truly, if you will believe me, I would not leave this Scaffold to enjoy all the pleasures that this World can give, I would not change my condition with them; not with my Witnesses, not with my Judges I would not change my condition; my Conscience tells me, and so I speak, I forgive them, the Lord of Heaven lay not this great sin

to

to their charge, let all the people of God so pray; they will one day see what it is to lose a good Conscience; and that it is better a great deal to have the light of Gods countenance, then to have a Conscience upon the Rack: They will one day see, that there is nothing to be feared but sin and wrath; and what a comfort and happiness the peace of a good Conscience is, the Lord shew it you.

I am brought here to die for Treason; for complotting against the State: and this is such a Treason as is proclaimed to all the World; such a Plot as was never before: blessed be God I am of another mind; I should appear sadly before God, if my Conscience told me what hath been represented: But I must needs declare my Opinion without offence to any; It is a pretended Plot, to beget a greater Plot: God grant that it be not so; a Plot I fear, to destroy all Church-Government, and the faithfull of the Lord and the godly: For other Plots I understand none; I profess in the presence of God, I know of no Plot, or had a hand in any Plot: I would not for 10000 Worlds be guilty of the bloud of any man: I am sensible how many thousands, and ten thousand thousands of sins *I* have committed, as the number of minutes of one hundred thousand thousands of dayes; that I am sensible of, and desire to bring them before the Lord to stone them to death, and to pour out flouds and tears for them before this that I am to die: But I am put now to appeal to the righteous God, whither I am going to stand before the Bar of an impartial Judge, that knows the intents and thoughts of my heart, and what all my endeavours have been, I never had any other thought then the honour of the Gospel and Religion, and to bring these precious things into the Channels that the Lord would have them in. This was my desire.

Not

Not long ſince I told a gentleman(now in heaven)that ſo great is the wound that it breaks my heart, to ſee the wonderfull ſcorn and contempt that lies on the face of Religion in the eys of Papiſts, Turks and Heathens,and all reformed Nations, that I profeſſe I have ſomtimes wiſh'd to have ſwim'd out of my chamber in tears, and ſaid to the gentleman, that it was a mercy if ever the Lord would find a means to waſh away the ſtain of ſcorn and contempt of the Goſpell, though it were with the bloud of his Miniſters and faithfull ſervants: Who knows what this days work may do? who knows what God hath for this land? Let none deſpiſe the day of ſmall things; if it be clay and ſpittle, if God take it in his hand, it ſhall cure the blind: What do we know what the blood of two men may do to fill up the meaſure of bloud? what the bloud of two men may do towards all the prayers and indeavours of Gods people? therefore be not troubled. But I pray give me leave: whatſoever is written concerning me,or the bleſſed ſervant of God who is gone before me, and now ſinging Halelujahs to all eternity, this days work will be written in heaven, it will be written bythe Lord Jeſus: Suffering for God and Religion, confident I am you will find it ſo. I can look in the face of God (excepting my weakneſſe and failings) that in all this buſineſſe I had no ill intention: you are to believe a dying man: I am ſenſible what it is to die to God,to the ocean of eternity; to go to ſtand at his bar: Believe me, believe me; I profeſſe before God, Angells and men, I know not what I die for this day: what ever reports do ſay, believe the words of a dying man: I am confident the *odium* of this dayes work (were an Angell of heaven to write a book) will never be waſht off: that this days work will lie upon ſome: the Lord grant they may ſee their ſin, and repent in time.

But let me ſay a little further: I confeſſe I cannot but wonder, how the men now in Power can look any Chriſtian in the face, my conſcience tells me, that it is the originall of all plots, that hath torn the Nation aſunder, and the Kingdome, and the Liberty, and the profits aſunder: whatſoever belongs to Chriſtians and rational men, is all torn from us; have they not thrown the three Kingdoms into that miſery, that I am confident all the enemies of the Church could not have done the like; but rather how ſhall they be able to look the great God in the face, when he ſhall make inquiſition for

bloud? to whose door shall all the bloud of *England*, and *Scotland*, and *Ireland* return? who knows not, that within these three yeares there was the most glorious promising morning that ever looked *England* in the face? how comes it to passe that we have such dayes of trouble and misery? God knowes who hath had a hand and been instruments in it. He knowes that these are the Plotters with a witnesse: These are the Egyptians that all the people of God groan under: and all ——

Then the people interrupted him, and some said, He is going to die with a lie in his mouth, Mr. Sheriff. *When they were quiet he went on thus.*

I must needs say, that the blood that was shed in *Queen Marie's* daies was a delightfull sight and persecution, and it was a pleasant sight to Antichrist in the Bishops time, and there have been many delightfull sights of late that I will not speak of, because it gives offence; but the most joyfull sight that ever Antichrist saw, he beholds this day in the blood of the faithfull Ministers and servants of God; and now I come upon the Scaffold to fight this bloudy Field, the Lord grant I may be enabled to overcome it.

I confesse, I believe it is a sad sight to the people of God, to see all their prayers, fastings, and tears come to this, to see the piercing sword thrust into their bowells; but I desire them to take heed of repining and murmuring, look who stands on the top of the ladder, and not on the next step, see God ordering and contriving all; look not at the hammer, but God; God is the best contriver, he knows what is best for you, and us, and blessed be his Name: I am come hither to witnesse of his glory, there is none knows what glory a suffering condition brings to God, and to his Saints, how many flowers it adds to their Garland, we should see as many run to it, as now shun it, when Christ shall come, and all shall call to the Mountains and Rocks to fall on them and cover them! what a blessed sight will it be for Christ to put forth his hand to them, if they saw but the infinite reward Christ hath for them in heaven, it would be sufficient to invite them to come in and suffer for the Lord; nay we may be ashamed we have done no more, nor looked after the gaining of that precious eternall Mansion, where we shall see God, and be in the arms of Jesus Christ, where we shall suffer no more, but enjoy an infinite weight of beatitude and glory.

Let

Let the word of a dying man prevail; for the Lords ſake hold to the truth, part not from the truth; it were better that heaven ſhould fall, and the world be on fire, then that God ſhould be diſhonoured; the leaſt error is as a barrell of gunpowder that will blow up the Church and Kingdome; Error draws a ſword againſt Chriſt and his truth; take heed of Error, leſt you fall into a gulfe that you can never come out of. Ask your own experience, how many Miniſters and Profeſſors have fallen into error, and have gone away with guilt upon their conſcience, and a blot upon their names: Error is like a chain, if the ſoul would go to Chriſt, it cannot: error is as a partition, under what gloſſe ſoever it come: though in the habit of a Saint or Angell, it is dangerous poyſon; be like *Athanaſius*, own the truth, though all the world were againſt it; or as *Martin Luther*, who ſet himſelf againſt all the power and force of *Antichriſt*; own the truth, though eminent Miniſters and Profeſſors that ſeem eminent in faith and grace fall from it, as many do.

I ſhall now ſuddainly conclude; I am very unwilling in my condition to ſpeak any thing that may be offenſive to any, I have onely this to ſay, and I have done; whatſoever chargeth me neareſt, I am confident the Lord will one day clear my innocence; he hath written down the actions and proceedings, and he will one day ſhew it, and vindicate my name in the ſight of all; there will be a Reſurrection, and all men ſhall be called to an account for all the reproaches that have been caſt upon the faithfull of the Lord.

All the Churches of Chriſt are now in the furnace; the Church of *Scotland*, *England*, and *Ireland*; the Lord grant that all may mourn, and never dare to keep a joyfull day, till the Church of Chriſt be delivered; for God calls, and Chriſt calls, and the Church calls; and I had rather be (and let all that fear God chuſe rather to lie) in the Den of Dragons, then to be of the number of thoſe that rejoyce when the Churches of God are in ſorrow; the Sun ſhined upon *Sodome* a little while, but preſently a ſhowre of fire and brimſtone came and deſtroyed them all, ſo the proſperity and flouriſhing ſtate of the wicked is like that; the children of God may ſit in darkneſſe for a while, but they ſhall have light to eternity: wicked men may rejoyce for a moment, but there is an eternall night that will follow, that ſhall never be blown over: A child of God had

rather that all the Lions in the wilderneſſe ſhould roar, then to have God angry; what were it for a man, though like *Alexander*, he had proſperity, and had as much peace and glory as *Pompey*, and did ride in as much ſtate as *Ceſar*, when he is under the frownes of God that hates wicked men, as much as he is hated of wicked men: the Buſh may burn but it ſhall never be conſumed, the Church hath been 5600. years under burning, and perſecution, and flame, but the Church ſhall remain to the end of the world.

Thus I have endeavoured to declare my ſelf and my Conſcience, though with much brokenneſſe and diſtemper: and now I am to take my leave of the world, I have only this word to ſay, that you bear me witneſſe, that whatſoever may be charged on me, or may be ſaid after my death, I am confident God will own me for an innocent perſon; I never to the beſt of my remembrance had a hand or a heart, I had rather die a thouſand deaths then ever to have a hand in the blood of any of Gods people; and now God hath brought me hither, and not men, it is his hand; I again deſire to forgive all the world, every mans perſon, the Lord grant that they may have mercy, and I deſire, as now I deſire mercy, the Lord to forgive all their ſins. I know all things are under Gods dealing and Commiſſion, and this condition had never come to me if God had not ſeen it good, and though the Axe be ſo near, if I had more to do for God, and for his Church and people, he would do with the Axe, as he did with that of *Abraham*, God would take hold of it, and could, and bleſſed be his Name that he takes the ordering of it to himſelf, therefore I have a quiet ſpirit, I have no diſcontent in the world: and now not to ſpeak of death, alas that is nothing; but of Eternity that my ſoul is now lancing into: I am now to enter into eternity, where to ſtand with a naked ſoul before God, whoſe eyes are ten thouſand times brighter then the Sun, that cannot indure to behold iniquity: I am now going to God that will be as a conſuming fire, and as armed thunder againſt me, if I did not ſee his infinite mercy, and my bleſſed Saviour ſtanding between me and the Lord, preſenting all that I do: if I had all the righteouſneſſe of all the Angells in heaven this day to go to God the Father, wo, and ten thouſand woes to me, if I had not intereſt in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, if I had the ſin of all the perſons that are here, and that have been ever ſince the Creation, if I come and ſtand

cloathed

cloathed this day with the righteouſneſſe of the Lord Jeſus, I am confident I ſhould have pardon for them all, as for one; there lies my ſtrength, and my hope, and my happineſſe, all my righteouſneſſe, and all my prayers, and all my performances, are but as filthy rags; and ſhould God draw out the beſt Sabbath that ever I kept, and the beſt prayer that ever I made, and the beſt ſillable of that prayer, it would be a ſin; I have ſcarlet ſins, ſins of all ſorts and ranks, I deſire you that you would all mourn and help me this day, bleſſed be the Lord of heaven for the benefit and ſupport of the prayers of Gods people; I am perſwaded that there was never any man in my condition, that went to heaven upon the wings of ſo many prayers: be ye all content, and go home and rejoyce before the Lord, be certain that you keep a day of Thankſgiving for this daies work, and our ſouls ſhall bleſſe God to eternity for this daies work; there is not one drop of blood could be ſpared, if it could, it ſhould have been kept; God knows how to anſwer your prayers and tears, though we muſt not be heard, he hath ſummoned us to come to the arm of his mercy, why do I ſtay from God longer? I bleſſe God I am coming.

Now I ſhall only deſire as *Sampſon* when he made his laſt requeſt, only this once help me, my call to you all is, that you would pray and mourne for me, this once help me, after a little while your prayers will do me no good, nor your tears will do me no good; therefore now for the Lords ſake help me off the Scaffold, lift up a prayer to God for me, let there be ſome compaſſion, you know not what fightings may be in me; but I bleſſe God, I hope to walk triumphantly to God preſently, but do you act your parts, your ſtrength, and your intereſt, whatever your prayers and tears can do, help me I beſeech you now, for I ſhall never more need your help.

And now is Chriſt taking notice what was caſt into the Churches treaſure, he looked upon the widows two mites, Chriſt is looking this day who helps me a poor creature, and ſupports me, and ſaith Chriſt, is there none will help him? O pray help me to commend all my conditions to God, that he would rebuke Satan, and make me die ſincerely as a Chriſtian, that I may willingly lie down on the Block, as I would to lie down on a Feather-bed after I am

weary,

weary, that I may be willing to come to him; pray for me, that all the graces that my ſoul wants they may be ſtrengthened.

Moſt glorious God, I now into thy hands commend my ſpirit, and all that is in me; O bleſſed God, I never was in want but thou diddeſt relieve me, I was never in diſtreſſe but thou helpedſt me, never, never, and I am confident thou wilt not leave me, till thou ſee my ſoul in heaven. O bleſſed Saviour! thou wenteſt up and down on the earth, thou knoweſt what it is to ſuffer, what it is to be betrayed, what it is to be ſcorned and tempted; bleſſed Saviour thou ſaweſt me when I was running from thee, wilt thou leave me now I come to thee: Lord Jeſus I commend all into thy hands, hoping that after this day I ſhall never ſuffer more, nor never pray more.

His laſt Prayer in the hearing of the people.

O Moſt bleſſed and glorious Lord God, a God of piercing eys, and ſeeſt me thy poor creature, thou knoweſt the intention of my heart; men hear the words of my mouth, but thou knoweſt the intentions of my ſoul. O Lord put words into my mouth what I ſhould ſpeak for my ſelf, now is the laſt time that ever I ſhall ſpeak, till I come to ſpeak and admire thee to eternity. O bleſſed God! O what is a ſmile of thy face now! O one ſmile is more worth then ten thouſand worlds. O bleſſed God! before my head is ſevered from my body, let me be aſſured that my ſoul ſhall be received into thy hands. O bleſed God! let me find now the benefit of all the prayers and tears, and deſire of my heart. Lord it is true, I have nothing to plead, I have not a handfull of Goats haire, I have nothing but a dead dull heart; but Lord, though I be broken and diſtracted, thou lookedſt upon *Hezekiah* with his chattering prayers, when he chattered as a Crain; bleſſed Lord, look upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and whatſoever imperfections thou haſt ſeen in me pardon them, and waſh me from them in his bloud; Lord, though I had never ſinned before I came to this Scaffold, yet I have committed ſin enough here to throw me into everlaſting burning: but Lord, look for thy promiſe ſake, for thy mercy ſake, look over thy bowells of compaſſion, conſult with them now, and with thine Attributes, and whatſoever Chriſt and Mercy may ſpeak, hear the cries this day.

Bleſſed

Bleſſed God, there is no reaſon that thou ſhouldeſt own me, but there is reaſon thou ſhouldeſt own thy promiſe, and own thy truth, and own thy Chriſt: O bleſſed God, grant that this day all thy people may bleſſe thee, and may go and keep a day of Thankſgiving, that I have not carried my ſelf any way unbecoming a Chriſtian; Lord let me give thee the glory, I am but poor duſt and aſhes, anp clay, the unworthieſt in the world, all my ſtrength is nothing; I bleſſe God I am now coming where I ſhall need Faith no more, nor need Hope no more: O Lord! therefore let me act all the ſtrength I have in thy Promiſe, and in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſome particular promiſe. O Lord ſhew thy ſelf, O one ſmile for the Lord Jeſus Chriſts ſake. I commend all unto thee, I lay my neck upon the Block, I give my ſoul into thy hands, take my ſoul, it is no matter what becomes of my body, I ſhall never more, never more hope for any thing, or deſire any thing, but all my ſoul ſhall be filled up; Lord hear me, and help me, and ſtand by me, and ſtrengthen me, and guide me, and pardon and forgive all my ſins for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſake.

His prayer being ended, he put off his dubblet, and ask't for his Noble friend Dr. *Baſtwick*, and imbraced him: after that he imbraced his Unkle, and others of his friends on the Scaffold; then laying his head on the Block, Dr. *Baſtwick* came to him, and wiſh'd him to take off his Rings, which accordingly he did, by raiſing himſelf upon his knees, and gave them to his Unkle; which done, he laid his head on the Block, and holding up his left hand, the Executioner at one blow and a ſmall raſe ſevered his head from his body.

FINIS.